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Mr. COOKE'S
SERMON,

PREACH'D

On *Sunday, October 16, 1709.*

On Occasion of the Death of
Dame MARY COOKE.

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THE BRITISH MUSEUM

SERMON
BY
MR. COOKE

On Sunday, October 16, 1703.
PREACHED
AT THE
BRITISH
MUSEUM

DAVID MARY COOKE
On Occasion of the Death of

THE BRITISH MUSEUM

The Blessedness of Dying in the LORD
Explain'd and Exemplified,

235.
I N A
S E R M O N
P R E A C H ' D

On *Sunday October 16. 1709.*

In the Parish Church of
St. Bennet Paul's Wharf, London,
On Occasion of the Death of

Dame MARY COOKE,
A Late

Worthy INHABITANT of the said Parish:
Who departed this LIFE on the 6th Day of
that Month.

Publish'd at the Earnest Request of some of the Auditors.

By THOMAS COOKE, A. M.
Rector of the United Parishes of *St. Bennet, and*
St. Peter Paul's Wharf.

L O N D O N :
Printed by J. B. and are to be Sold by JOHN MORPHEW,
near Stationer's-Hall, 1709.

Dame Mary Cooke,

The Most Entirely, and Most Deservedly Beloved

W I F E of

Sir JOHN COOKE, Knight, Doctor
of Laws, &c.

Was Born Saturday 25 January, 1678.

Was Married Thursday 19 December, 1695.

Fell asleep Thursday 6 October, 1709.

REV. XIV. *Middle Part of the*
13th Verse.

Blessed are the Dead which die in the
Lord.

IN speaking to These Words I shall
 proceed in this Method.

First, I shall shew who may be said to
 die in the Lord.

Secondly, I shall speak of the Blessedness
 which will attend all such Persons.

And

Thirdly, I shall draw some Inferences from
 my Text, and what may be said on it.

First then, I propose to shew who may
 be said to die in the Lord.

Some *Commentators* render my Text thus,
 Blessed are the Dead which die for the
 Lord; according to which rendring the
Blessedness here pronounced would be con-
 fin'd to such as are *Martyrs*, or who suffer
 violent

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violent Deaths for the sake of *God and Religion*: Now, though such Persons will without doubt be rewarded with *Eternal Life* (which is the Chief, if not the *Only Blessedness* here spoken of) yet many others will partake also of the same Reward; and consequently, there can be no Reason for Reading or Understanding my Text in so strait and limited a Sense. Besides, the Original will warrant no other Translation but this; *Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord*: And, as this is the most proper Translation of the Original, so, that I may not seem to waste Time, I shall immediately proceed to shew, That by Persons *who die in the Lord*, we may presume are to be understood

First, Such as have led good Lives on Earth. And

Secondly, Such as die in the Faith of the Son of God.

First then, I say, they must be allow'd to *die in the Lord*, who have led good Lives on Earth.

God not only made and preserves Us, but he has also set us a Rule of Action:

And

And the End for which he permits us to live here, is to try how far we will be Obedient to, and Observant of, the Rule he has set us. Which Rule prescribes several *Religious* and *Moral* Duties. By *Religious* Duties, I mean, all such as are to be paid to God immediately: By *Moral* Duties, I mean such as we are to Discharge, either to our Neighbours, or to our Selves: In each of which Respects, tho' there are several Duties Incumbent on us, I shall not endeavour to enumerate them, but rather observe, That all the *Religious* Duties are, in Scripture, couch'd under the One general Term of *Godliness*: And of the *Moral* Duties, those we are to Discharge to our Neighbours, under the Term of *Righteousness*: And those we are to Discharge to our Selves, under the Term of *Sobriety*. Nay further, the Discharge of all Duties, (whether *Religious* or *Moral*) is, in the same Writings, term'd *Goodness*, or *doing Good*: And accordingly, by *good Lives*, in this Proposition, I mean such as are conformable to the reveal'd Will of God, as That requires us to *live Soberly, Righteously, and Godly in this present World*. A *good Life* then, I say, is that which is conformable to the Will of God,

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God, at least so far, as it is in the Power of Man to be conformable thereto.

My meaning is, That he who uses his utmost care to keep his *Conscience void of Offence towards God, and towards Man*; who makes the Holy Scriptures the Rule of his Life; not wilfully omitting what they enjoin, or doing what they forbid; and who, because he cannot be perfectly innocent, is careful to supply all his Defects of Innocence, by the sincere Exercise of Repentance: He, I say, who does all this, must be allow'd to lead as good a Life, as it is in the Power of Man to lead: Which is as much as God requires of any Man to do, who exacts no more of us, than he gives us Ability to perform; nay, so gracious is he, under the Gospel, as to promise to accept our unfeigned Repentance, instead of That perfect Obedience, which he enjoin'd under the Law, without annexing any such Favourable Condition to it.

Now, from the Account I have hitherto given of it, no Man can, with Reason, pretend that it is not in his Power to lead a good Life: And, since it is in our Power so to do, our Condemnation must be most
Just

Just (because we bring it upon our selves) if we do not *live well*.

Which *living well*, is the most effectual Means we can use, to *die well*; since common Experience informs us, (some very few Instances only excepted) that as Men Live, so they usually Die: If they have liv'd in a Sense of God and Goodness, they retain it to their last Minute; it asswages the Pain, and takes off the Terror, of their approaching Death: As was remarkably seen in the very *Worthy Person* who has been so lately snatcht away from among us, who having *Conscientiously* attended God's *Publick Offices in this Place*, in the time of her *Health*, enjoy'd great Satisfaction therein at the time of her *Departure*, which was thereby made *easy* to her; so *easy*, that tho' she thought her self one of the most happy Women in the World, as she often declar'd; And, tho' she had not completed the 31st Year of her Age, she express'd not the least Desire of living longer, but shew'd an humble and cheerful Submission to the Divine Will; and as we may presume God has heard her *wanted humble Petitions made to him*, which were, That she might not survive her most *Affectionate*

B Hus.

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Husband: Nor can I fully express the truly Christian Temper she evidenc'd in parting from *him*: Thus *happy* was she, in her *Death*; as she had been, in her *Life*; so that I may apply to her, the Remark the Royal Prophet makes upon Righteous Persons, and say, That she having endeavour'd to keep *Innocency*, and to take heed to the thing that was right, she had *Peace* at the last. Whereas Persons, who have lived, (as the Inspired Writer phrases it) *without God in the World*, having not subjected themselves to the *Divine Law*, or to any other, but *That which is in their Members*, their End is generally attended with Senselessness, and Stupidity, or Horror, and Desperation: For, at That Time, their Consciences will affrighten them with a Sight of their Approaching Punishment; if they cannot awaken them, to endeavour at least, to repent of their past ill-spent Lives. Good Reason then had the Wicked Prophet to wish, and pray, that he might *die the Death of the Righteous*. And no less Reason have we, if we desire the same, and would accomplish our Desires, to *prepare* our selves for *Death*, by leading a *good Life*; doing what Good we can thro' the Course of our Lives,

Lives, that so we may hope God will be Good, and Gracious to us, at the Hour of our Death. For, they who *live to the Lord*, yielding stedfast Obedience to his Commands; and duly put their Trust in him, making his Law, the constant Subject of their Practise; and Him, the Object of their Faith and Hope; may be assur'd that they shall also *die in the Lord*; that is, they shall *finish their Course with Joy*, having a Prospect of *That Crown of Life*, which God the Righteous Judge has laid up for, and will bestow upon them in the Heavens, because they have duly serv'd, and stedfastly believ'd on him, whilst they were permitted to live on Earth.

Which Circumstance of *Faith*, added to *Good Works*, leads me on to observe

Secondly, That They only can be said to *die in the Lord*, who have not only *fought a good Fight*, but have also *kept the Faith*; or, who have, not only *lived morally well*, but also *die in the Faith of the Son of God*: Nor can any one *live well*, (at least since the Promulgation of the Gospel) but he who is endu'd with That Faith; it being now necessarily required, that they who *believe in God the Father*, should *believe also*

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in his Son ; that is, they should *believe* that *he sent his Son into the World* to die for the Sins of Mankind ; and that *That Son came forth from the Father*, with whom he was, as God, from all Eternity, tho' at a certain appointed Time he condescended to be Born of a Woman, and to appear visibly in the World, as Man. They should *believe* also that as *God and Man*, he is the proper *Mediator between God and Man*, and the alone proper Intercessor with God, for Man; and that *Eternal Life* is to be bestowed on us, only in, and thro' his *Merits, Mercies and Mediation*. This is *That Faith* which, if I mistake not, the *New Testament* all along requires us to have in the Son of God. For, tho' during the *First Law*, Men knew but of *One Person* in the Godhead ; and That revealed to them by such Characters only as denote it's Unity : Yet, since the *Gospel* declares *Three Persons to be That One God* ; our Faith in God must answer That Revelation which he has made of himself : Especially we must, (as I have before laid down the manner of it) *believe in the Son of God*, in whom alone That Covenant is made between God and Man, which is set forth in the Holy Gospel. As
then

then the First Act or Ground of all Religion is, that we *believe in God* ; so. (since this clear Discovery and Revelation is made of the *Nature of God* which the *New Testament* presents us with) that we may duly exercise the Religion establish'd thereby, we must as firmly *believe in God the Son, who redeem'd us ; as in God the Father, who made us* : For, as there is no Name given under Heaven, whereby we can be saved, but the Name of the ever blessed *Jesus* ; so the Lives we lead on Earth, should be full of Faith in That Son of God who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity : And, as he is the just Object of our Faith during our whole Lives, so should he be so, more immediately at the Hour of our Death ; if we desire, or expect, to live together with him, for ever hereafter. Which *Pious Example* was set us, by the good Lady, who is so lately pass'd from us to the State of *Blessedness* ; whose just Character is, That she was *Regular and Constant* in her publick and private Devotions ; and that her whole Conversation was the genuine Effect of her *substantial Piety*, which made her omit no Opportunity of receiving the *Blessed Sacrament* in time of her

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her *Health*; and That effectually prepared her for the Reception of *it* in her last Sickness, on the Day before she died; which she did with such *Ardent Devotion*, such *Christian Courage* and *firmness of Spirit*, under great bodily Weaknesses, as I can only wish we all, in God's due time, may be enabled to imitate. And I cannot forbear adding, That her last Words, at the Moment she Expired, were, *Lord Jesus receive my Spirit; and having said this, She fell asleep.* A strong Evidence both of her former, and present, Faith in him, on whom she called so earnestly for Mercy, with her dying Breath. And, that we may be induced, to follow her *Example*, and to partake of her *Comforts*; Give me leave to remind you, That they only will *Reign with Christ* in his Kingdom of Glory, who have been his faithful Subjects in his Kingdom of Grace; having done what he enjoin'd, and believ'd on him as, his Gospel requires, they should. Thus necessary is it to Eternal Salvation, and consequently it is necessary, both to make us *live*, and *die well*; that we *believe aright in the Son of God.*

Not that I shall pretend, to denounce Damnation against those, who know not the Gospel;

Gospel; or, those who knowing it, do not firmly believe all the Matters contained therein, as I have explain'd them: But shall rather leave all such to the Mercy of God; to which Attribute, it is not in the Power of Man to set any Bounds. However, I cannot but assert, That according to the Tenure of the Gospel, (as the most learned, and sincere, Persons of all Ages have ever understood, and interpreted, the Covenant made therein) none are capable of Eternal Salvation, (whatever other Conditions they observe) unless they steadfastly believe that *Jesus Christ* is, not only the Son of the Father; but, that together with him, *he is God*; and that he has purchased for, and will bestow on all who thus believe on him, an Eternal Inheritance: And consequently, they only who live, and die, in *This Faith*; may be truly said to die in the Lord.

Which shall serve to be spoken, on the First Thing observ'd from my Text: I proceed now, as I propos'd,

Secondly, To speak also of the *Blessedness* which does, and will attend those who, according to what has been already laid down, may be supposed to die in the Lord.

To

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To whom, Death gives present and future Happiness, or Blessedness; in as much as thereby

First, They are deliver'd from the Miseries of this present Life. And

Secondly, They are translated to a better Life.

First then I say, They who *die in the Lord* are *Blessed*, in that they are delivered from the Miseries of this present Life: This is what is implied in the Words immediately subjoin'd to my Text, wherein it is declar'd, that they are *Blessed*, because *they rest from their Labours*. It is the Lot but of too many of the Sons of Men, to be in such a Condition, with respect to the Gifts of Fortune, whilst they live here, that the *Sentence of Death*, as the Wise Man speaks, *is, or would be, at any time, acceptable to them*: Nor indeed are the Circumstances of any Man, so altogether Prosperous, or so Uninterrupted, but that, upon some unlucky Accident or other, he would, for a while at least, desire to die. So many Troubles are Men involv'd in, in this Life; so many Crosses and Disappointments do they meet

meet with, in the Management of their Estates; so many ill Tongues are they exposed to, which are ready to blast their Reputation; and so many acute, and violent Diseases, and Casualties, attend to destroy their Bodies; at least, to separate them, for a time, from their Souls: That we cannot but, with Holy *Job*, confess, That *Man is born to Trouble, as the Sparks fly upward*: And, that *the Days of every Man on Earth are few*; but, as few as they are, they are all very full of *Evil*: Which Expression implies, That they are every Minute liable to Trouble, as well as prone to commit Sin: Nor are Afflictions (such as affect and injure our Bodies, our Estates, and our Reputations) less frequent or common than the Temptations wherewith our Spiritual Enemies are perpetually endeavouring to seduce us to Sin, and Wickedness. And since both our Souls, and Bodies, are exposed to so many, and so great Dangers, is it not to be accounted an Happiness when we are deliver'd from them *all*? Which we cannot be, till God sees fit to lay the utmost temporal Judgment upon us, which is *Death*; For *That* affords the only sure Refuge from all the Inconveniencies this

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abounds with: *It* being the only infallible Remedy to abate our bodily Pains, and cure all our Diseases: For, *it* at once puts an end to our Labours; which during Life, are very Numerous, and Grievous; and *it* gives Rest to our *Minds*, as well as *Bodies*; and, if we are, as we ought to be, prepar'd to meet it, it gives us *That Rest* which is incomparably better than any thing we have enjoy'd, or can enjoy; till we are awaken'd to That Eternity of Bliss, which is, by the Promise, and Appointment, of our gracious God to succeed this Life. Nay, Death does in a manner give us That Happiness. For

Secondly, Such as *die in the Lord* are blessed also, in that by their Death they are translated to a *better Life*; being taken away from hence, only to reap the Reward of their Labours: Which is what St. *John* means; when immediately after my Text, he tells us, That *their Works follow them*: That is, their Works are not only remembred, and commended, by such as are permitted to survive them in this World; but, they are also *had for a Memorial before God*, who will, at the Great Day of Judgment, recount them to their Joy, and Comfort;

fort; and will, as the Reward thereof, bestow upon them, *That Incorruptible Crown of Glory, which never can fade away, but is Eternal in the Heavens.* Which Reward, as it is the utmost Blessing Man can receive, so it is That Blessing which he cannot receive, till after Death has put an end to his being in this World.

How soon after the Death of any particular Person, This Blessing will be bestowed upon him; or, what degree of Happiness is immediately conferr'd upon *Good and Holy Persons*, after they are, by Death, taken out of the Miseries of this present Life; I shall not take upon me to determine: Only I may assert, That no one will be perfectly instated in the Bliss which is to be had in the next World, till after the Day wherein a strict Account shall be taken of all Men, by *That Man whom God has appointed to judge the World, even his Son Christ Jesus.*

However, The Day of every Man's Death ushers into him That Great Day of Eternity; and, provided he *die in the Lord*, tho' he has not the Fruition, or Possession, yet at the Minute of his Death he has, as I may say, a very pleasing, and almost as

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visible a Prospect of his future Happiness, as St. Stephen had just before he underwent his *Martyrdom*: A full and plain Account whereof, you have in the *Close of the seventh Chapter of the Acts of the Apostles*.

So that Death, to such a Person, is only his Passage from a short, and uncertain; to a most certain, and durable Life; it changes his *mortal*, into an *immortal* State; it casts off, his *Corruption*; and puts upon him, *Incorruption*; it frees him from all *Sin and Misery*, and translates him to a perfectly *Good, and Happy State of Being*. It puts an end, it is true, to a *grievous* Life; but it gives Rise, and Beginning, to an inexpressibly *Joyous* One: And I need say no more to evince the *Blessedness* of those who die in the Lord. I hasten then to draw the proposed Inferences from my Text; which are

First, That all the Sons of Men must die. And

Secondly, That some of them only will, or do, die in the Lord.

First then, From what has hitherto been said I infer, That all the Sons of Men must die; that is, they must all undergo a Temporal

poral Death; the Necessity whereof appears, in that this is part of the Curse denounced against the First Man upon his Fall: Which Curse, as well as his Guilt, is entail'd on all his Posterity. So that whether Man would have been Immortal or no, if he had continu'd Innocent; (which is a Matter fiercely disputed by some) nothing is more certain than that by Sin he became Mortal: For, temporal Death, after a painful Life, is the Punishment set upon the first Man immediately after he transgress'd the only negative Precept given him by his Creator: And *as in Adam we all sinned, so in him also*, as the Apostle speaks, *we all do, and must, die*. The Truth whereof is confirm'd, by what we every Day see in others; and feel, in our selves; For, we see, that others die; and we feel in our selves such Pains, and Diseases as do, every moment, threaten us with Death; at least they forbid us, to think it possible for us, to escape the undergoing of temporal Death.

Which may serve to be spoken, on the First; and to make way for, the last Inference. For

Secondly, and to conclude, From what has been hitherto said, I infer, That some
of

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of the Sons of Men only will, or do, *die in the Lord*: Which Truth is, not only implied in my Text, wherein those who *die in the Lord* seem to be distinguish'd from some others who are dead; but it is confirm'd, too by parabolical, and plain Texts, occurring in the *Holy Gospel*. As for Instance, when the Sons of Men are divided into the *Tares*, and the *good Grain*, which are suffer'd to *grow up together till the great Day of Harvest*; at which time it is declared, That the former, which are said to represent wicked Men, shall *be burnt*; and the other which represent good Men, shall *be bound up together by themselves*, and be preserv'd. And, in another place we read, that when Christ shall *call the World together*, part of Mankind, which have been as *Sheep*, which are also afterwards more plainly called *the Righteous*, they shall be *set on the Right Hand* of their Judge, and shall *go away into Life Eternal*; but the rest of them, which are there termed *Goats*, and are declared to be such as have been *Wicked*, they shall be *set on the left Hand* of their Judge, and shall *go into everlasting Punishment*.

As then, we know, that That future Reward will be bestow'd only on such as have
lived,

lived, and died well here ; and That Punishment, will be inflicted, only on such as, by their wicked Lives, which they persisted in to the Hour of their Deaths, have made themselves liable to the *Eternal Wrath and Vengeance of God*: So, I need add no more to prove, that tho' all the Sons of Men do die, yet some of them only do *die in the Lord*.

Consider then what has been said ; retain it in your Memories ; reflect upon it in your Retirements ; and God grant, it may have it's due Influence, making you all strive to enroll your selves in the Number of the *Blessed* described in my Text.

Which I pray God ye may be, thro' the *Merits and Mercies of Christ Jesus*. To whom with *The Father* and the *Eternal Spirit*, we are bound to ascribe *Honour, Power and Glory*, for ever and ever. *Amen*.

F I N I S.

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ced in to the Honour of their Deaths have
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